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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 8, 1976

TIME: 12:00 noon

PLACE: Santiago, Chile  
(President Pinochet's Office)

SUBJECT: U.S.-Chilean Relations

PARTICIPANTS: Chile

Chile Project (#S199900030)

U.S. Department of State

Release ☒ Excise ☐ Deny ☐Declassify: In Part ☐ in Full ☐

Augusto Pinochet, President

Patricio Carvajal, Foreign Minister

Manuel Trucco, Ambassador to United States

Ricardo Claro, OAS/CA Conference Coordinator for  
Chilean GovernmentUnited States

The Secretary

William D. Rogers, Assistant Secretary for Inter-  
American Affairs

Anthony Rervas (Interpreter)

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**UNCLASSIFIED**The Secretary: This is a beautiful building. The conference is well organized. Are you meeting with all the delegations?Pinochet: Yes. Two or three a day. I want to tell you we are grateful that you have come to the conference.The Secretary: It is an honor. I was touched by the popular reception when I arrived. I have a strong feeling of friendship in Chile.Pinochet: This is a country of warm-hearted people, who love liberty. This is the reason they did not accept Communism when the Communists attempted to take over the country. It is a long time

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(Drafting Office and Officer)

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struggle we are a part of. It is a further stage of the same conflict which erupted into the Spanish Civil War. And we note the fact that though the Spaniards tried to stop Communism 40 years ago, it is springing up again in Spain.

The Secretary:

We had the Spanish King recently, and I discussed that very issue with him.

Pinochet:

I have always been against Communism. During the Viet-Nam War, I met with some of your military and made clear to them my anti-Communism, and told them I hoped they could bring about its defeat.

The Secretary:

In Viet-Nam, we defeated ourselves through our internal divisions. There is a world-wide propaganda campaign by the Communists.

Pinochet:

Chile is suffering from that propaganda effort. Unfortunately, we do not have the millions needed for counter propaganda.

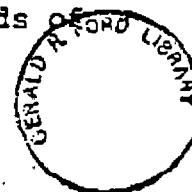
The Secretary:

I must say your spokesman (Sergio Diez) was very effective in this morning's General Assembly session in explaining your position. In the United States, as you know, we are sympathetic with what you are trying to do here. I think that the previous government was headed toward Communism. We wish your government well. At the same time, we face massive domestic problems, in all branches of the government, especially Congress, but also in the Executive, over the issue of human rights. As you know, Congress is now debating further restraints on aid to Chile. We are opposed. But basically we don't want to intervene in your domestic affairs. We can't be precise in our proposals about what you should do. But this is a problem which complicates our relationships and the efforts of those who are friends of

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Chile. I am going to speak about human rights this afternoon in the General Assembly. I delayed my statement until I could talk to you. I wanted you to understand my position. We want to deal in moral persuasion, not by legal sanctions. It is for this reason that we oppose the Kennedy Amendment.

In my statement, I will treat human rights in general terms, and human rights in a world context. I will refer in two paragraphs to the report on Chile of the OAS Human Rights Commission. I will say that the human rights issue has impaired relations between the U.S. and Chile. This is partly the result of Congressional actions. I will add that I hope you will shortly remove those obstacles.

I will also call attention to the Cuba report and to the hypocrisy of some who call attention to human rights as a means of intervening in governments. I can do no less, without producing a reaction in the U.S. which would lead to legislative restrictions. The speech is not aimed at Chile. I wanted to tell you about this. My evaluation is that you are a victim of all left-wing groups around the world, and that your greatest sin was that you overthrew a government which was going Communist. But we have a practical problem we have to take into account, without bringing about pressures incompatible with your dignity, and at the same time which does not lead to U.S. laws which will undermine our relationship.

It would really help if you would let us know the measures you are taking in the human rights field. None of this is said with the hope of undermining your government. I want you to succeed and I want to retain the possibility of aid.

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If we defeat the Kennedy amendment, -- I don't know if you listen in on my phone, but if you do you have just heard me issue instructions to Washington to make an all-out effort to do just that -- if we defeat it, we will deliver the F-5E's as we agreed to do. We held up for a while in others to avoid providing additional ammunition to our enemies.

Pinochet:

We are returning to institutionalization step by step. But we are constantly being attacked by the Christian Democrats. They have a strong voice in Washington. Not the people in the Pentagon, but they do get through to Congress. Gabriel Valdez has access. Also Letelier.

The Secretary:

I have not seen a Christian Democrat for years.

Pinochet:

Also Tomic, and others I don't recall. Letelier has access to the Congress. We know they are giving false information. You see, we have no experience in government. We are worried about our image. In a few days we will publish the constitutional article on human rights, and also another setting up the Council of State. There are a number of efforts we are making to move to institutionalization. In the economic area, we have paid our debts, after the renegotiation. We are paying \$700 million in debts with interest this year. We have made land reforms. And we are taking other constitutional measures. We have freed most detained prisoners. There have been 60 more just recently. In September 11, 1974, I challenged the Soviets to set free their prisoners. But they haven't done so, while we have only 400 people who are now detained. On international relations, we are doing well. In the case of Bolivia, we have extended our good will. It all depends now on Peru.

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The Secretary: I have the impression that Peru is not very sympathetic.

Pinochet: You are right. Peru does not wish to see the idea proposed.

The Secretary: Peru told me they would get no port out of the arrangement.

Pinochet: Peru is arming. Peru is trying to buy a carrier from the British for \$160 million. It is also building four torpedo boats in Europe. Peru is breaking the arms balance in the South Pacific. It has 600 tanks from the Soviet Union. We are doing what we can to sustain ourselves in case of an emergency.

The Secretary: What are you doing?

Pinochet: We are largely modifying old armaments, fixing junked units. We are a people with energy. We have no Indians.

The Secretary: I gather Chile generally wins its wars.

Pinochet: We have never lost a war. We are a proud people. On the human rights front, we are slowly making progress. We are now down to 400. We have freed more. And we are also changing some sentences so that the prisoners can be eligible for leaving.

The Secretary: If you could group the releases, instead of 20 a week, have a bigger program of releases, that would be better for the psychological impact of the releases. What I mean is not that you should delay, but that you should group the releases. But, to return to the military aid question, I really don't know how it will go tomorrow in the Senate.

Trucco: The Buchanan amendment is workable.

The Secretary: I repeat that if the House version succeeds, then we will send the planes.

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Trucco:

(Discusses the technical aspects of the 1975, 1976 and 1977 legislation.)

Trucco:

The problem is now in the Senate, for the FY 1977 bill. Fraser has already had his amendment passed by the House.

The Secretary:

I understand. We have our position on that. My statement and our position are designed to allow us to say to the Congress that we are talking to the Chilean government and therefore Congress need not act. We had the choice whether I should come or not. We thought it better for Chile if I came. My statement is not offensive to Chile. Ninety-five percent of what I say is applicable to all the governments of the Hemisphere. It includes things your own people have said.

Trucco:

That's true. We are strongly in favor of strengthening the OAS Commission.

The Secretary:

We are not asking the OAS to endorse anything. I have talked with other delegations. We want an outcome which is not deeply embarrassing to you. But as friends, I must tell you that we face a situation in the United States where we must be able to point to events here in Chile, or we will be defeated. As Angola demonstrates, Congress is in a mood of destructiveness. We were in a good position in Angola. We thought Angola could become the Viet-Nam of Cuba. This would have occurred if Cuba had begun to sustain 20 casualties a week. Cuba could not have stood that for long. We had the forces for that. Congress stopped us. But I am persuaded that the Executive, whoever is elected, will be stronger after the election.

Pinochet:

How does the US see the problem between Chile and Peru?

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The Secretary: (after a pause) We would not like to see a conflict. Much depends on who begins it.

Pinochet: The question is really how to prevent the beginning.

The Secretary: The American people would ask who is advancing on whom.

Pinochet: But you know what's going on here. You see it with your satellites.

The Secretary: Well, I can assure you that if you take Lima, you will have little U.S. support.

Pinochet: We did it once, a hundred years ago. It would be difficult now, in view of the present balance of forces.

The Secretary: If Peru attacked, this would be a serious matter for a country armed with Soviet equipment. It would be serious. Clearly we would oppose it diplomatically. But it all depends, beyond that. It is not easy to generate support for U.S. military action these days.

Pinochet: We must fight with our own arms?

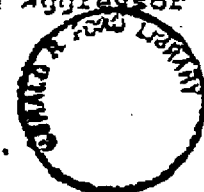
The Secretary: I distinguish between preferences and probabilities. It depends how it happens. If there is naked aggression, that means greater, more general resistance.

Pinochet: Assume the worst, that is to say, that Chile is the aggressor. Peru defends itself, and then attacks us. What happens?

The Secretary: It's not that easy. We will know who the aggressor is. If you are not the aggressor, then you will have support. But aggression does not resolve international disputes. One side can stage an incident. But generally we will know who the aggressor is.

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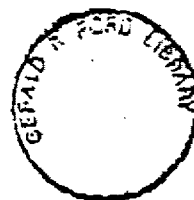
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Carvajal:

In the case of Bolivia, if we give Bolivia some territory, Bolivian territory might be guaranteed by the American states.

The Secretary:

I have supported Bolivia in its aspirations to the sea, but de la Flor is not happy about it.

Carvajal:

If we gave some territory to Bolivia, and then permitted Peru to the use the port, Peru would get everything it needs.

The Secretary:

It is my feeling Peru will not accept.

Pinochet:

I am concerned very much by the Peruvian situation. Circumstances might produce aggression by Peru. Why are they buying tanks? They have heavy artillery, 155's. Peru is more inclined to Russia than the U.S. Russia supports their people 100%. We are behind you. You are the leader. But you have a punitive system for your friends.

The Secretary:

There is merit in what you say. It is a curious time in the U.S.

Pinochet:

We solved the problem of the large transnational enterprises. We renegotiated the expropriations, and demonstrated our good faith by making prompt payments on the indebtedness.

The Secretary:

It is unfortunate. We have been through Viet-Nam and Watergate. We have to wait until the elections. We welcomed the overthrow of the Communist-inclined government here. We are not out to weaken your position. On foreign aggression, it would be a grave situation if one were attacked. That would constitute a direct threat to the inter-American system.

Carvajal:

There is massive Cuban influence in Peru. Many Cubans are there. The Peruvians may

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be pushed. And what happens to the thousands of Cuban soldiers now in Africa, when they are no longer needed there.

The Secretary:

If there are Cuban troops involved in a Peruvian attack, then the problem is easy. We will not permit a Cuban military force of 5,000 Cubans in Peru.

Carvajal:

They now have a system, where the Peruvians enter in groups of 20, but the Peruvian registry registers only 1.

The Secretary:

The Cubans are not good soliders.

Carvajal:

But there is the danger of irresponsible attack.

Claro:

I have sources in Peru. There is, I am told, a real chance that Cuba could airlift troops to Peru.

The Secretary:

This would change the situation, and the question then is easy. We will not permit Cuba another military adventure. A war between Peru and Chile would be a complex thing, but a war between Cuba and Chile or others, we would not be indifferent.

Claro:

Your planners were down here in 1974. They did not believe that there was a Cuba threat. The Soviets use Cuba for aggression, I argued. Angola has since confirmed this.

The Secretary:

We will not tolerate another Cuban military move. After the election, we will have massive trouble if they are not out of Angola. Secondly, I also feel stronger that we can't accept coexistence and ideological subversion. We have the conditions now for a more realistic policy. It would help you if you had some human rights progress, which could be announced in packages. The most important are the constitutional guarantees. The precise

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numbers of prisoners is subordinate. Right to habeas corpus is also important. And if you could give us advanced information of your human rights efforts, we could use this. As to the Christian Democrats, we are not using them. I haven't seen one since 1969. We want to remove the weapons in the arms of our enemies. It is a phenomenon that we deal with special severity with our friends. I want to see our relations and friendship improve. I encouraged the OAS to have its General Assembly here. I knew it would add prestige to Chile. I came for that reason. We have suggestions. We want to help, not undermine you. You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende. Otherwise Chile would have followed Cuba. Then there would have been no human rights or a Human Rights Commission.

Trucco:

We provided the General Assembly the answers to some of the Secretary's suggestions. What will be missing will be our explanation of the coming constitutional acts.

The Secretary:

Can you do those while the OAS is here?

Pinochet:

We have wanted to avoid doing anything while the OAS is here, since it then looks as though we did it to dampen OAS pressure. We might be able to in 30 days.

The Secretary:

If we can, we are prepared to say we have the impression that the constitutional act is helpful.

Pinochet:

I discussed it in my inaugural speech.

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